

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Northrup Theater

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 116 North Main Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Syracuse [N/A] vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Hamilton code 075 zip code 67878

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In
my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be
considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Christy Davis Signature of certifying official/Title Christy Davis/Deputy SHPO 12/23/04 Date

Kansas State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

- ☐ entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- ☐ removed from the
National Register
- ☐ other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

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Hamilton County, KS

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of
Kansas

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National
Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

RECREATION & CULTURE: Movie Theater

Current Functions

RECREATION & CULTURE: Movie Theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:
Mission/Spanish Revival

Materials

Foundation: Concrete
Walls: Brick
Roof: Asphalt
Other: Terra Cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Architecture
Recreation & Culture

Periods of Significance

1930-1955

Significant Dates

1930
1948

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

LaRosh & Sons Construction (Builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☒ Other:

Name of repository: Syracuse/Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce

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10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property less than 1 acre**UTM References**

A. Zone Easting Northing
14 258287 4207422

B. Zone Easting Northing

C. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Kristen Ottesen, Architectural Historian and Elizabeth Rosin, Partnerorganization Historic Preservation Services, LLC date June 2004street & number 323 West 8th Street, Suite 112 telephone 816-221-5133city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64105**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black-and-white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Syracuse / Hamilton County Chamber of Commercestreet & number P.O. Box 678 telephone 620-384-5459city or town Syracuse state KS zip code 67878

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Continuation Sheet

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Northrup Theater
Hamilton County, Kansas

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION STATEMENT

The Northrup Theater, located at 116 Main Street, Syracuse, Hamilton County, Kansas, is a two-and-a-half-story masonry two-part commercial block building located in the town's historic commercial district. The building has a rectangular footprint that is fifty feet wide and extends the depth of the block from the sidewalk on the east to the alley on the west. The brick and hollow clay tile walls rest on a concrete foundation. Steel trusses support the barrel-shaped roof and the floor. The Northrup Theater exhibits the general form and configuration of the movie theater property type that appeared throughout American small town commercial districts during the first half of the twentieth century. The façade's stepped gable and terra cotta accents suggest a vernacular Spanish/Mission Revival design, although the façade also includes some classically-inspired decorative elements that include terra cotta swags in the lintels above the second-story windows and in the panel capping the parapet. The storefront's Moderne appearance dates to the building's 1948 renovation. The theater is in excellent condition and with the majority of its character-defining stylistic features and materials intact, the Northrup Theater retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

SETTING

The Northrup Theater is located in Syracuse's historic commercial district. It sits on the west side of Main Street, three lots south of the intersection of Avenue B. The theater directly abuts the concrete sidewalk at its front, the alley at the rear and shares party walls with the buildings to the north and south.

EXTERIOR

The textured blond brick primary (east) façade is six bays wide. The stepped parapet has terra cotta coping and hides the building's arched bow-truss roof. Six symmetrically arranged rectangular windows punctuate the second story. The theater entrance and two storefronts at the ground floor level have an asymmetrical arrangement. Subtle changes in the brickwork and terra cotta details distinguish the upper portion of the façade. Terra cotta lintels above the second-story windows have classically-inspired swags and



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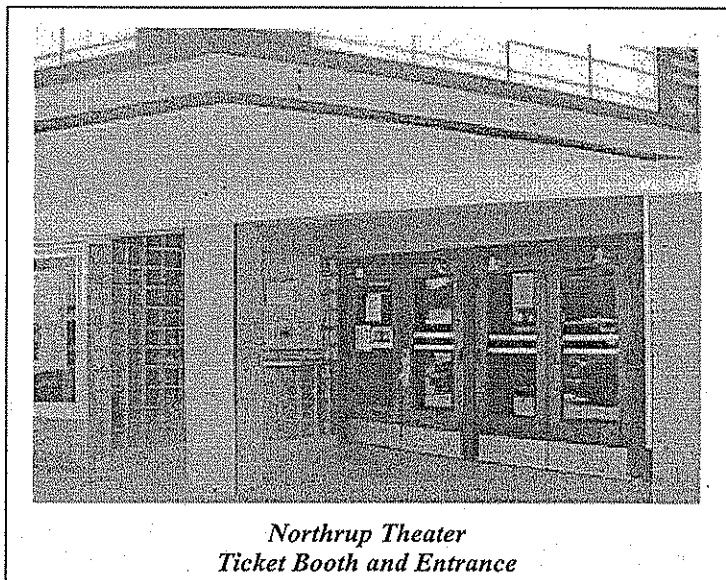
Northrup Theater
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cartouches. A course of soldier bricks extends across the façade at the lintel level. Above the windows, soldier and stretcher bricks create a long rectangular panel in the center of the parapet. Marking the corners of the panel are small square terra cotta medallions with a floral design. Terra cotta cartouches flank the panel. Below the terra cotta coping, a course of brick edges the stepped parapet and small square terra cotta medallions with a floral design accentuate each right-angle of the stepped parapet. Terra cotta scrolls flank a classical-inspired terra cotta panel decorated with swags that caps the parapet.

The six second-story window openings contain non-original two-over-two double-hung windows that appear to date to the 1948 renovation. Horizontal muntins lend a modern appearance and date the window units to the mid-century.

At the ground floor level, the asymmetrical fenestration includes two storefronts flanking an offset recessed entrance. An article published in the local paper suggests that the configuration of these openings reflects a 1948 renovation. The article notes that the entrance to the theater was originally symmetrical with double-leaf entrances flanking a central ticket booth.¹ The current recessed entrance creates an open exterior vestibule and features two pairs of adjacent double-leaf doors with full glazing. The curvilinear, glass block ticket booth is perpendicular to the south side of the entrance. The adjacent storefronts have aluminum-framed windows and doors. The smaller storefront occupying the north two bays has two full-height windows and a glass door with a fixed transom that rises to the same height and has the same dimensions as the full-height windows. The storefront occupying the two southern bays has two windows above a brick bulkhead and a single-leaf door. Fixed transoms are above each of the windows.

Above the theater's entrance is a large polygonal metal marquee. Centered above the marquee is a vertical sign mounted perpendicular to the primary façade and displaying the theater's name — "Northrup." This double-sided sign is painted brown with orange trim and white letters. The marquee features stylized Native American patterns depicted in brown, orange, yellow, and turquoise blue. The original signage featured neon lights, as noted in a 1930 newspaper article that mentions the neon "Northrup" sign and says the marquee will be finished and



*Northrup Theater
Ticket Booth and Entrance*

¹ Sharon Fallier, "Alterations That Have Been Made on Proposed Structure—(and When)," circa 1982, Syracuse-Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce, Syracuse, Kansas.

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installed for the opening night.² In a 1982 paper, Sharon Fallier writes that the façade received a new marquee during the 1948 renovation, suggesting that the current marquee dates to that renovation.³ The existing sign and marquee are at least fifty years of age and contribute to the significance of the theater.

The theater's north and south walls share party walls with the adjacent buildings, leaving little of the theater's brick side walls visible. The back (west) wall is a large expanse of brick containing a single metal door near the southwest corner of the building. Boards cover an opening that once contained an evaporative cooling unit.

INTERIOR

The long rectangular lobby is directly inside the main entrance. The floor slopes up gently from the sidewalk and evens out before it reaches the triple set of auditorium doors on the opposite (west) side of the lobby. An opening in the north wall leads to a stairwell that ascends to the balcony. The concession stand and ticket booth occupy the south side of the lobby. The concession stand features a tufted leatherette front with an integrated glass candy case. Brown and tan composition tile cover the lobby floor. Twelve-by-twelve-inch fibrous tiles cover the lobby ceiling, which is lower over the concession stand. With the exception of the west wall, which has wood paneling, the lobby walls are textured plaster. The north lobby wall has a colorful floral motif painted by Mrs. Muriel Ellis, the owner's daughter, during the 1948 renovation.⁴ Two movie poster display cases are set in this wall. Illuminating the lobby are indirect fluorescent light fixtures above the concession stand and a ceiling-mounted neon light comprised of a pink circle with a blue star in the center that is centrally located in front of the concession stand.



Concession Stand and West Side of Lobby

²"Northrup Theatre Will Open Monday," Publication Unknown, 4 April 1930, Syracuse-Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce, Syracuse, Kansas.

³Fallier, "Alterations That Have Been Made on Proposed Structure—(and When)."

⁴Sharon Fallier, "Interior Description," circa 1982, Syracuse-Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce, Syracuse, Kansas.

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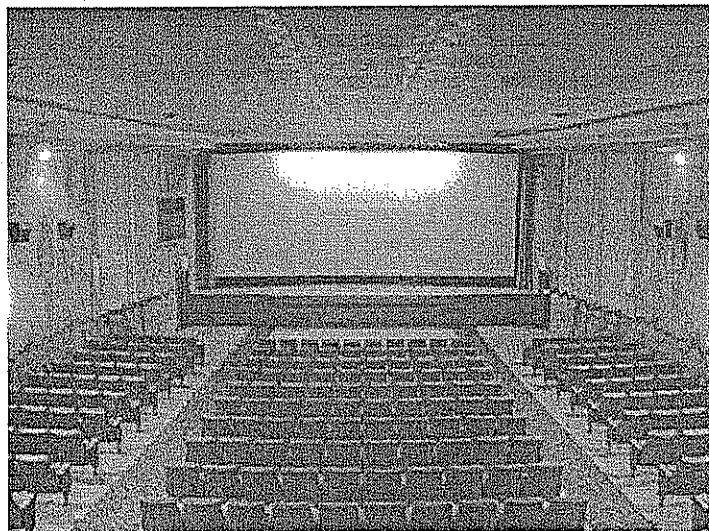


*Secondary Lobby Passageway
at the Rear (East) of the Auditorium*

In 1948, a wood partition wall was added at the rear (east) of the auditorium to create a secondary lobby passageway. This space is approximately eight feet deep and spans the width of the auditorium. The east side of the partition is covered with the same tufted leatherette as the concession stand and contains display cases for movie posters. A staircase to the front of the balcony is accessed from the south end of this passageway. Located along the east wall at the north and south ends of the passageway, are men's and women's restrooms, recently updated with new fixtures and finishes. Curtained openings in the north and south ends of the partition provide access to the auditorium.

The main auditorium is spacious. Originally constructed to seat approximately 700 patrons, the recent installation of large upholstered seats and the creation of additional space between rows reduced the seating capacity to 276. Two aisles divide the seating area into three sections. The concrete floor slopes

toward the stage at the front (west) of the auditorium.



Auditorium

The stage accommodates a huge screen, reportedly one of the largest in the area. Orange patterned carpet covers the floor of the aisles. The textured plaster walls have a wainscot that is scored to resemble stone. The smooth plaster upper walls feature stylized floral patterns stenciled in shades of blue, orange, and yellow. The wainscot has a mottled appearance that incorporates many shades of the colors used in the stenciled images. This paint scheme dates to 1948.⁵ The Celotex paneled ceiling, which also has stenciling in hues of blue, orange, and yellow, was recently repainted to repair damage

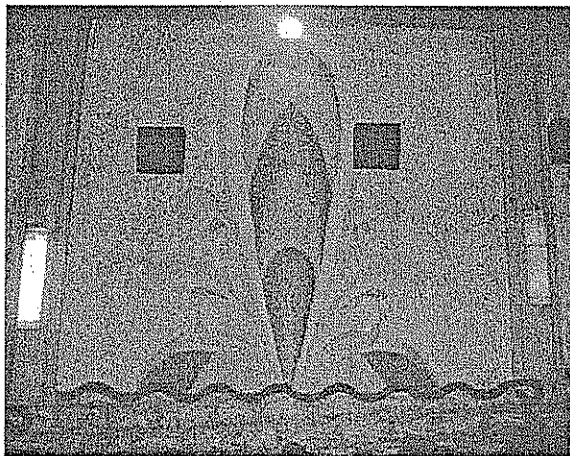
⁵ Fallier, "Interior Description."

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Stencil on Auditorium Wall

from roof leaks. Recessed lights in the auditorium ceiling and decorative wall sconces illuminate the auditorium. The Art Deco-style sconces have vertical, half-cylindrical, opaque glass shades set in geometric metal fixtures.

The balcony no longer provides seating for patrons. The projection booth is behind the balcony in the center of the wall. To the left (north) of the projection booth, a former office now provides storage space. A residential apartment occupies the second-floor space to the right (south) of the projection booth.

The building contains two basements — one is at the front (east) of the building, under the lobby and the storefronts; the other is at the rear (west) of the building, is under the stage and houses mechanical equipment.

INTEGRITY

In constant operation since 1930, the Northrup Theater clearly represents its intended function as an entertainment venue. A substantial renovation in 1948 altered the configuration of the storefront, entrance, and lobby; added signage to the building's primary façade; built a partition wall at the rear (east) of the auditorium to create a secondary passageway; and updated the interior finishes. Although substantial in nature, these changes occurred over fifty years ago and are considered historic in their own right. These alterations were typical of those made to movie theaters across the country to provide the audience with a more comfortable, stylish and enjoyable movie experience. They reflect the technological and aesthetic evolution of the movie theater and contribute to the significance of the property. The building retains its historic form, plan, proportions, scale, and massing, as well as its character-defining architectural elements and materials on the exterior and interior. The Northrup Theater retains a high degree of integrity and clearly communicates its historic associations and feelings as a movie theater.

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Northrup Theater
Hamilton County, Kansas

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Northrup Theater at 116 Main Street, Syracuse, Hamilton County, Kansas is significant under National Register Criterion A for the area of RECREATION/CULTURE and under Criterion C for the area of ARCHITECTURE as documented in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas." The Northrup Theater has direct associations with the historic context "Historical Development of Public Entertainment in Kansas, 1854-1954," developed as part of the MPDF and meets the MPDF registration requirements. Constructed in 1930 in Syracuse's historic downtown commercial district, it is an excellent example of the movie theater property type built in Kansas and throughout the United States in the early-twentieth century and illustrates how local developers adapted the typical main street commercial block building form to the specialized use of a movie theater. While the use and form of many similar theaters were often drastically altered for other commercial endeavors when larger more modern movie houses opened in their vicinity, the Northrup Theater survives intact and continues to function as a movie theater. As the movie industry evolved in the post-World War II era, the theater received significant alterations to its storefront/entrance, lobby, foyer, and interior décor in 1948. Although substantial in nature, these alterations reflect the evolution of the movie industry and enhance the significance of the property. The period of significance for the Northrup Theater begins with its construction in 1930 and ends in 1955, the fifty-year threshold for National Register eligibility.

PROPERTY HISTORY

Local businessman Frank F. Northrup built the Northrup Theater in 1930 by for approximately \$60,000. Contractor Frank LaRosh supervised the construction of the theater. Prior to the construction of the Northrup Theater, Syracuse had only one silent movie theater, the Isis Theater.⁶ Upon its completion, a newspaper article heralded the Northrup Theater as the largest movie house in western Kansas. Equipped with the most modern technology, including RCA photophone equipment, the theater could accommodate silent movies as well as "talkies."⁷ The auditorium featured "high grade, roomy, leather upholstered seats" and "thick carpets and subdued lights."⁸ The pastel colors of the interior suggested an atmosphere of restfulness and peace. An evaporative cooling system provided comfort in the summer.⁹

⁶ "Historic Northrup Theater Finally Realizing Potential," *The Syracuse Journal*, October 3, 1990, Syracuse-Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce, Syracuse, Kansas.

⁷ "Northrup Theatre Will Open Monday," Publication unknown, April 4, 1930, Syracuse-Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce, Syracuse, Kansas.

⁸ Ibid.

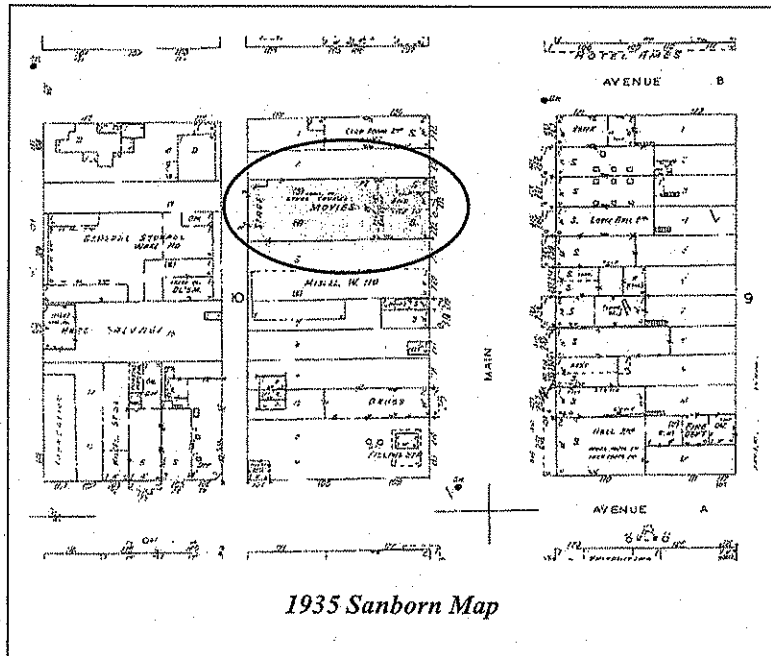
⁹ This was only recently replaced with a modern air conditioning system.

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Frank Northrup was born in McConnellsville, Ohio, in 1879 and came to Syracuse in 1910, at the age of thirty-one, to start an automobile business, the Northrup Motor Company. He lived in Syracuse the rest of his life, dying in July 1959 at the age of seventy-nine. Active in the local community, Northrup built the Duckwall store, which adjoins the theater to the south, as well as the Stewart Furniture Store. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge and the Consistory in Wichita.

It was not Northrup's original intent to have the theater bear his name.

Northrup intended the theater to have

a Native American name, but when the local newspaper announced a contest to name the theater, several citizens approached Northrup and urged him to give the theater his name.¹⁰

In 1948, during the post-World War II economic boom, Northrup commissioned the J. M. Lort Jr. Association of Aurora, Colorado to conduct an extensive remodeling of the theater.¹¹ At that time, they reconfigured the entire ground level of the theater. The exterior changes included offsetting and recessing the theater entrance, constructing the glass block ticket booth, installing the ramped floor from the sidewalk through the lobby, and installing a new neon marquee on the primary façade.¹² The interior received a new concession stand with a red Formica counter, padded leather, and a metal and glass candy case; a larger movie screen in the auditorium; and a new decorative paint scheme.¹³

Movie theaters were a lifelong interest of Northrup and his family. In 1952, they opened the Rancho 50 Drive-In Theater west of Syracuse (which operated until 1968) and the Pontiac Theater in Holly, Colorado (which Northrup's daughter Muriel Ellis and her husband Marvin operated).¹⁴ After Northrup died 1959,

¹⁰ "Northrup's New Theatre Best in This Part of State," Publication Unknown, 24 January 1930. Syracuse-Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce, Syracuse, Kansas.

¹¹ Sharon Fallier, "Property's History," circa 1982, Syracuse-Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce, Syracuse, Kansas.

¹² Fallier, "Alterations That Have Been Made on Proposed Structure—(and When)."

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ This theater remains in operation.

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Hamilton County, Kansas

his wife Maybelle ran the Northrup Theater until 1981, when their daughter Nelda Terrill began running the theater.¹⁵ Mrs. Terrill ran the theater for several years.

Under Mrs. Terrill's continued ownership, the theater sat vacant for about six years during the late 1980s, after which she leased it to an individual from Scott City for six months. Subsequently, the Syracuse/Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce attempted to operate the theater. In November 1991, with substantial community support, the Chamber of Commerce purchased the Northrup Theater. The Chamber successfully operated the theater for thirteen years and completed numerous repairs and upgrades, including installing a new platter projection system in 1994, remodeling the restrooms to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, installing new seating, and installing a heating and air conditioning system in 2000.¹⁶

¹⁵ Fallier, "Property's History."

¹⁶ Syracuse-Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce, interview by author, 2 June 2004, Transcript, Historic Preservation Services, LLC, Kansas City, Missouri.

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Section 10, Photographic Documentation Page 11

Northrup Theater
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GEOGRAPHIC DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 3 and 4, Block 10, Original Town, Syracuse, Hamilton County, Kansas.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This nomination includes the parcel of land that is historically associated with the resource.

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Photographer: Kristen Ottesen
Date of Photographs: June 2004
Location of Negatives: Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas

Photograph

Number

Camera View

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1. | Front (east) façade |
| 2. | Streetscape view to the northwest |
| 3. | Rear elevation, view to the northeast |
| 4. | North elevation |
| 5. | Ground level theater entrance and storefronts |
| 6. | Marquee and sign |
| 7. | Ticket booth and display case |
| 8. | Lobby, view to the west |
| 9. | North lobby wall |
| 10. | Lobby, view to the northeast |
| 11. | Foyer, view to the south |
| 12. | Front of the auditorium |
| 13. | Rear of the auditorium |
| 14. | Stencil on the auditorium side wall |
| 15. | Sconce on the auditorium side wall |

5660 11 SW
(TRIBUNE 4 SW)

